

October 30, 2022

NO CHANGES IN COVID STATUS

COVID IS NOT 'OVER'...BUT WE ARE IN CONTROL OF SERIOUS DISEASE ON A BROAD BASIS.

COVID REMAINS WIDESPREAD AT THIS TIME AND IS INCREASING IN EUROPE AND NEW YORK CITY. WILL WE SEE HIGHER LEVELS IN THE U.S? IT IS UNCERTAIN, BUT INCREASES ARE LIKELY TO HAPPEN DUE TO THE WAXING AND WANING OF ACTIVITY LEVELS AS HISTORY HAS SHOWN.

THERE IS NO SEASONALITY TO COVID. THIS IS PROVEN,
AND WE STILL MAY SEE ADDITIONAL SURGES. RIGHT NOW, THERE ARE SOME CHANGES IN THE VARIANTS. 25% OF CURRENT COVID ARE SUBVARIANTS OF BA5 AND WILL LIKELY BE THE CAUSE OF INCREASING INFECTIONBUT NOT ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN ANY VARIATIONS IN COVID LEVELS AT THIS TIME.

**BOOSTER COVID VACCINATIONS:
THE NEW COVID VACCINE IS BIVALENT.... THIS MEANS IT CONTAINS THE ORIGINAL VACCINE COVERAGE.... PLUS, COVERAGE MORE SPECIFICALLY FOR BA5 FORMS OF COVID.**

GIVEN THE SAFETY OF THE VACCINE, IT IS BEST FOR EVERY ADULT TO CONSIDER THIS BOOSTER...BUT....

I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THE BOOSTER VACCINE IF:

YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID AND ARE OVER 70 YEARS OLD

YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID AND HAVE HEALTH ISSUES THAT MAKE YOU MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO COVID COMPLICATIONS SUCH AS.... EMPHYSEMA, SIGNIFICANT DIABETES, HEART FAILURE, OR ARE ON IMMUNE SUPPRESSING MEDICATION.

IF YOU HAVE HAD A COVID INFECTION FROM 2020 UNTIL NOVEMBER 2021, THEN YOU HAVE A 30+% PROTECTION FROM THE CURRENT BA-5 STRAIN.

IF YOU HAD COVID AT XMAS OR LATER, THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE AN 80% PROTECTION FROM THE CURRENT BA-5 STRAIN.

IF YOU HAD COVID YOU CAN STILL BENEFIT FROM ANOTHER BOOSTER, BUT IT IS NOT AS ESSENTIAL, AS YOUR PREVIOUS COVID INFECTION DOES HELP BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY THROUGH NATURAL MEANS.

IF YOU HAVE HAD 4 COVID VACCINES, THE 5TH VACCINE IS NOT AS ESSENTIAL, BUT IT WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PROTECTION AND IS WORTH STRONGLY CONSIDERING.

REMEMBER, IF YOU GET COVID WE CAN ALWAYS TREAT YOU WITH PAXLOVID PILLS, THEY ARE VERY EFFECTIVE.

IT IS PROVEN SAFE TO GET THE FLU SHOT AND THE COVID SHOT AT THE SAME TIME..... ...BUT I

RECOMMEND YOU SEPARATE THEM IF POSSIBLE SO YOU DON'T HAVE A STRONGER REACTION TO THE COMBINATION.

GET YOUR COVID BOOSTER IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER AND THE FLU SHOT AT THE END SEPTEMBER OR DURING OCTOBER.

IF YOU HAVE RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS AND A NEGATIVE HOME COVID TEST.... YOU MOST LIKELY STILL MOST LIKELY HAVE COVID. ISOLATE AND CONTINUE TO RETEST.

MANY WHO HAVE AVOIDED COVID ARE NOW GETTING INFECTED DESPITE ALL OF THEIR EFFORTS.

THE NEW BA-5 VARIANT IS MORE CONTAGIOUS. IT IS NOT MORE SERIOUS. ALL OF OUR PATIENTS ARE DOING WELL. SOME NEED TREATMENT WITH PAXLOVID.... MOST DO NOT.

WE FINALLY HAD ONE HOSPITALIZATION AMONG HUNDREDS OF OUR PATIENTS WHO HAVE RECENTLY HAD BREAKTHROUGH COVID.

PAXLOVID ANTI-VIRAL PILLS ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE.... BUT MOST PEOPLE DO NOT REQUIRE MEDICATION TO TREAT THEIR CASE OF COVID.

IF SYMPTOMS ARE MILD, THERE IS NO NEED TO TAKE THE PAXLOVID OR MOLNUPIRAVIR. A GOOD NATURAL IMMUNE RESPONSE IS A STRONG PROTECTOR AND

**PROVIDES IMPROVED FUTURE PROTECTION FROM
INFECTION AS WELL.**

**PLEASE LIVE LIFE, BEING CAREFUL IN WAYS THAT
MAKE YOU FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE, BUT DO NOT
RESTRICT YOUR ACTIVITIES.**

**WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION, BUT
AT THIS TIME, IN THE USA FOR THE MULTI-VACCINATED,
WE HAVE REACHED OUR ENDPOINT.**

**BA.5 VARIANTS ARE OVER 85+% OF ISOLATES
CURRENTLY IN ARIZONA.**

**FOR THE UNVACCINATED.... KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE
ROAD.... COVID CONTINUES TO BE AN ISSUE.
THE CURRENT VARIANT IS MUCH MILD, BUT THERE
ARE CONCERNS FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT
VACCINATED. WE ARE TREATING NEARLY ALL THE
UNVACCINATED THAT GET COVID.**

**IF YOU HAVE SIGNIFICANT RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS,
PRESUME THIS IS COVID AND PROTECT OTHERS!!!
GET TESTED AND IF PERSISTING SYMPTOMS AND
NEGATIVE HOME TEST.... RETEST.**

**COVID VERY HIGH IN THE PHOENIX COMMUNITY
BROADLY. IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID NOW IS A TIME
WHEN YOU MAY CONTRACT IT.
DO NOT WORRY BUT TAKE STEPS IF YOU WANT TO
AVOID INFECTION.**

**BREAKTHROUGH CASES IN ALL TRIPLE & QUADRUPLE
VAXXED ARE DOING WELL.**

BREAKTHROUGH CASES IN ALL THOSE PREVIOUSLY INFECTED ARE ALSO DOING WELL.

PAXLOVID PILLS AVAILABLE FOR ALL BUT ARE ONLY NECESSARY FOR THOSE WITH CHALLENGING SYMPTOMS IN THE FIRST 5 DAYS OR THOSE AT HIGH RISK FOR COMPLICATIONS FROM BREAKTHROUGH COVID.

4TH BOOSTER APPROVED FOR OVER 50, AND IT DOES PROVIDE IMPROVED PROTECTION FOR MILD AND SEVERE DISEASE, BUT IT IS FINE FOR YOU TO MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION ON THE 4TH SHOT AS 3 SHOTS PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROTECTION.

I RECOMMEND THE BOOSTER GENERALLY, WITH THESE SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

DO GET THE BOOSTER IF:

- YOU HAD 4 SHOTS AND DID WELL WITH THEM, YOU SHOULD DO WELL WITH THE 5TH SHOT.
- IF YOU DID NOT GET BREAKTHROUGH COVID YET.
- THE OLDER YOU ARE THE MORE BENEFICIAL THE 5TH COVID SHOT. FOR 70 AND ABOVE THE SHOT IS DEFINITELY QUITE USEFUL. UNDER THAT AGE IT'S LESS BENEFICIAL AND UP TO YOU PERSONALLY IF YOU WANT THE SHOT.

- DO STAY WITH THE SAME SHOT. IF YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING PFIZER...STAY WITH PFIZER. IF YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING MODERNA...STAY WITH MODERNA.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MASKING WHEN TRAVELLING IS A PERSONAL DECISION.

- DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF IF OTHERS ARE MASKING. IF YOU WEAR A HIGH-QUALITY MASK YOU ARE INCREASING YOUR PROTECTION AND DECREASING YOUR RISK.
- I DO RECOMMEND WEARING A KN95 OR N95 IN THE AIRPORT TERMINAL WHERE EXPOSURE IS GREATEST.
- ON THE AIRPLANE, WHEN THE ENGINES ARE FULLY ON, THE AIR IS BEING HIGHLY FILTERED AND EXPOSURE IS MUCH LESS. WEARING AN EXCELLENT MASK WILL REDUCE YOUR RISK DURING FLIGHT, BUT IT IS UP TO YOU IF YOU WISH TO USE THE MASK AT THAT TIME.

GUIDELINES IF YOU GET BREAKTHROUGH COVID:

<https://doctordoug.com/2022/01/10/i-have-covidwhat-do-i-do/>

100% OF OUR VACCINATED PATIENTS HAVE DONE WELL WITH ZERO HOSPITALIZATIONS.

COVID TESTING WITH AT HOME TESTS (ANTIGEN TESTS) ARE GENERALLY ACCURATE AND THEY ARE USEFUL. BUT A NEGATIVE TEST IN THE SETTING OF CLASSIC SYMPTOMS.... IS LIKELY A FALSE RESULT.

DO A PCR TEST TO CROSS CHECK OR IF YOU HAVE CLASSIC COVID SYMPTOMS, OR YOU MAY 'HOLD ON ADDITIONAL TESTING' AND PRESUME YOU HAVE COVID AND FOLLOW PRACTICES FOR THOSE WITH COVID.

5 DAYS OF QUARANTINE AND 5 DAYS OF MASKING IS THE PLAN FOR ALL COVID POSITIVE PATIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN VACCINATED.

PAXLOVID (PFIZER PILL FOR COVID) & MOLNUPIRAVIR (MERCK PILL) ARE AVAILABLE BUT RECOMMENDED ONLY FOR THOSE AT PARTICULARLY HIGH RISK OF COMPLICATIONS (IMMUNE SUPPRESSED OR UNVACCINATED). COVID PILLS ARE NOT NECESSARY FOR THE TRIPLE VACCINATED/DOUBLE VACCINATED.

IF YOU HAVE MILD OR QUESTIONABLE SYMPTOMS OR EXPOSURE AND YOUR TEST IS NEGATIVE, IT IS LIKELY ACCURATE.... BUT, IF YOU HAVE SIGNIFICANT RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS/FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS AND YOUR HOME TESTING IS NEGATIVE, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS IS A FALSE FINDING.

IN THE SETTING OF CLASSIC SYMPTOMS, SUCH TEST RESULTS ARE SUSPECT AS THE CURRENT ANTIGEN TESTING HAS BEEN MISSING SOME OMICRON INFECTIONS.

IF THIS IS THE CASE ARRANGE FOR PCR TESTING OR BE IN TOUCH AND WE WILL HELP YOU ARRANGE.

DO NOT ASSUME YOU ARE COVID FREE IF SYMPTOMS APPEAR STRONGLY TO SUGGEST COVID & ANTIGEN TESTING IS NEGATIVE...GET RETESTED WITH A TOP LEVEL TEST (PCR).

HOW DO I GET TESTED FOR POSSIBLE ACTIVE COVID INFECTION?

TESTING CAN BE DONE AT LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY OR BY A SELF-TEST FROM YOUR LOCAL PHARMACY.

<https://doctordoug.com/2020/11/22/covid-19-testing-sites/>

YOU MAY PURCHASE A HOME TEST KIT FROM AMAZON OR YOU CAN GET SIMILAR KITS AT WALGREENS OR CVS OR YOUR LOCAL PHARMACY.

I THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE A HOME KIT FOR SELF-TESTING AT HOME. IT IS LIKELY YOU WILL USE IT BY THE END OF WINTER.

RECOMMENDED HOME TEST KITS FROM AMAZON ARE:

- iHealth COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test
- Quidel QuickVue at-Home OTC COVID-19

[https://www.amazon.com/iHealth-COVID-19-Authorized-Non-invasive-Discomfort/dp/B09KZ6TBNY/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crid=1QISNYIENRKEO&keyw=ywords=ihealth+covid-19+antigen+rapid+test&qid=1655045654&sprefix=ihealth%2Caps%2C169&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExNUkwMFdSWINQTVQwJmVuY3J5cHRIZElkPUEwMzc1MzMzMzBUUjJUSVg4UFA5UyZlbnNyeXBoZWRBZElkPUEwNDQ5MzI4MzNBOTdXUk9TSk5FMiZ3aWRnZXR0YW1lPXNwX2FoZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZoNs aWNrPXRYdWU="](https://www.amazon.com/iHealth-COVID-19-Authorized-Non-invasive-Discomfort/dp/B09KZ6TBNY/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crid=1QISNYIENRKEO&keyw=ywords=ihealth+covid-19+antigen+rapid+test&qid=1655045654&sprefix=ihealth%2Caps%2C169&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExNUkwMFdSWINQTVQwJmVuY3J5cHRIZElkPUEwMzc1MzMzMzBUUjJUSVg4UFA5UyZlbnNyeXBoZWRBZElkPUEwNDQ5MzI4MzNBOTdXUk9TSk5FMiZ3aWRnZXR0YW1lPXNwX2FoZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZoNs aWNrPXRYdWU=)

https://www.amazon.com/Quidel-QuickVue-at-Home-COVID-19-Test/dp/B093NBTF75/ref=sr_1_3?crid=25COAA6CR9FBY&dchild=1&keyw=yords=rapid+covid+testing+kit+for+home&qid=1630678185&sprefix=rapid+covid+test%2Caps%2C241&sr=8-3

TESTING LOCATIONS CAN ALSO BE FOUND HERE:

<https://doctordoug.com/2020/11/22/covid-19-testing-sites/>

YOU CAN SEE DAILY TRENDS FOR ARIZONA AND THE U.S. HERE, ON THE CDC WEBSITE...JUST CHOOSE 'ARIZONA' FROM THE LIST.

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends_dailytrends

To monitor the course of COVID in Maricopa County, go to: <https://covidactnow.org>

LOCATIONS FOR COVID TESTING OTHER THAN OUR OFFICE...SEE OUR UPDATED LIST:

<https://doctordoug.com/2020/06/30/covid-19-testing-sites/>

LATE NIGHT TESTING AT NEXT CARE FACILITIES IS A CONSIDERATION. HERE IS THE LINK:

<https://nextcare.com/curbside/>

Know that our office is responding to COVID, and we are here to help. Reach out for assistance if you are not feeling well. We will develop a plan of action for you to move forward.

Yours in good health,

Dr. Lakin